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MILITARY

Negative

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EXTERNAL - POLITICAL

1. Laos. The central feature of Soviet press treatment of Laos during the week continued to be the obscuring of the question of communist intervention. The Soviet public was denied news reports on developments which revealed governmental policy and public attitudes towards Laos, not only in the West and neutral countries but also in the bloc itself. Thus little has been revealed of Nehru's position on Laos other than that he was disappointed "that the legal government of Prime Minister of Laos, Souvanna Phouma, was obliged to leave the country under circumstances of pressure, and that his place was taken by a person receiving support from the outside." The only indication that the bloc was involved operationally in Laos were reports of Western disbelief in charges allegedly made by the US concerning "Red units" introduced from the north, but nothing was said, even in the form of refuting western charges, of the possibility of direct Soviet involvement.

On January 13 Soviet newspapers published texts of letters sent by Sihanouk dated January 2, by Khrushchev dated January 7, by DRV Prime Minister Pham Van Dong dated January 4, and by Khrushchev dated January 9. In his exchanges with Sihanouk and Van Dong, Khrushchev agreed to Sihanouk's formula for an international conference to discuss Laos. Khrushchev himself previously has in public advocated a conference of the 1954 Geneva type. This also was proposed in the December 22 Soviet note to the UK and has been intermittently advocated in Soviet press treatment on Laos.

Other elements in Soviet press coverage of Laos were claims of military victories for the Pathet Lao, charges of actual US intervention by providing supplies and instructors, and providing South Vietnamese, Thai, and Chinese Nationalist troops, maintenance of the position that Pathet Lao and Kong Le forces were "government troops," operating on behalf of the head of the legal government, Souvanna Phouma, and equation of Cuba with Laos as dangers to peace.

2. Congo. Soviet press reports of Congo developments cited the apparent failure of the Mobutu move into Kivu province from Ruandi-Urundi as supporting evidence for the view that the Stanleyville regime is an increasingly strong and popular center of national resistence to Mobutu. The move into Kivu was also used by the Soviets for renewed attacks on Belgium and UN Secretary General Hammarskjold, notably in the Jan. 12 Soviet Government statement calling for an end to the Belgian trusteeship. In a wider sense the Jan. 12 statement served to give new impetus to the Soviet anti-colonialism campaign in conjunction with the renewed Security Council discussion of Congo. The marked racial flavor of the statement suggested increasing Soviet readiness to use racial antagonism as a propaganda weapon in Africa. The expression of support for the recent Casablanca conference statement on the need for aid to the "legal government" of Congo raised the question of the Soviet attitude toward any possible aid plan to the Stanleyville regime which might be worked out by the Casablanca conferees. (An earlier Soviet press report on the Conference

mentioned that the participants were believed to have worked out such a plan, to be put into effect outside the UN framework if the goals and principles underlying the presence of UN forces in Congo were not respected.)

3. Cuba. The US action in severing diplomatic relations with Cuba brought sharp criticism from the Soviet press as a provocation and another step in the "US plan" to overthrow the Castro revolution. The Soviet press also endorsed Cuban demands that the US Embassy in Havana be reduced to correspond in size with the Cuban mission in Washington, and warned against any attempt at aggression against Cuba because, "in our time it is impossible to count on any military conflict remaining isolated as a local war..." and hailed as a victory the special UN Security Council session, requested by Cuba. Completely ignoring the outcome of the debate, the Soviets declared that "a great majority" of the Council supported the Cuban action.

As the week closed, charges continued to be made in the Soviet press that the US and specifically the Eisenhower Administration, "in its last days," is planning aggression against Cuba including the training of counter-revolutionary bands at Guantanamo. The New York Times stories on U.S. training activities at Retalulay were seized upon (and attributed to CIA) to support this charge.

4. France. Soviet press coverage of the French referendum was not extensive, nor was there any high-level public comment on the results. The press stressed de Gaulle's loss of votes as compared with the 1958 referendum, and the high rate of abstentions. The Moslem boycott, especially in the towns, was said to have been effective despite Army efforts to coerce voters to go to the polls. Even those who voted "yes" were described as voting not so much for de Gaulle as for peace through negotiations. The press also asserted that opposition to de Gaulle had increased most in industrial centers and adduced this as evidence for the view that the "no" vote in metropolitan France basically represented leftist forces and not the ultras. This last point suggested concern that the Soviet public might obtain the impression of ultra strength and Communist Party stagnation.

A Pravda (Jan 9) "Observer" article once more -- as in the case of the TASS Dec. 31 statement -- criticized the third French atomic test in the Sahara as a "provocation against world peace," and described French atomic capacity as a threat especially to the peoples of Africa. The article was perhaps timed to associate the Soviets with similar criticism of French atomic testing expressed at the Casablanca conference of African states.

5. Nasution Visit. (CONFIDENTIAL) The joint Soviet-Indonesian communique issued on the Nasution visit was short and unspecific. It said that Nasution had been sent to the USSR "in accordance with measures for building up the armed forces of Indonesia, mainly in connection with the special circumstances arising as a result of the development of tension recently around the question of West Irian." The communique said that the Soviet Union had met the requests put forth by Nasution for purchasing

military equipment. No information was available about the size or scope of the new Soviet-Indonesian arms deal although the Embassy learned second-hand that an Indonesian Embassy officer described it as a blank check to Indonesia for military supplies. There was no discussion of specific international questions in the communique. Since it is likely that the Soviet pressed Nasution to include such items, it is a credit to him that they did not appear and the communique contrasts favorably with most joint Soviet pronouncements issued with Asian-African VIP visitors in the recent past.

6. Soviet Relations With Latin America. The visit by a Supreme Soviet delegation to Bolivia and Chile were reported in the Soviet press which stressed the ceremonial nature of their reception in La Paz including the holding of a special joint session of Parliament and a meeting with President Paz. As the delegation departed for Chile, it was announced in the Soviet press that Bolivia had accepted a credit of $150 million and a Bolivian delegation will visit Moscow in the last half of January. No details on the delegation's activities in Chile have appeared to date.

Pravda front-paged an announcement that on Jan. 10, Khrushchev received a delegation of authors and artists from Ecuador.

7. Berlin/Germany. The USSR in a brief note on Jan. 7 in reply to US, British and French notes of Oct. 26 stated that it could not accept the Western point of view and reaffirmed the Soviet position (as presented in a note of Sept. 26) regarding the application of controls on movement within the area of Greater Berlin. The Western powers on Oct. 26 had reaffirmed the Four-Power status of Berlin and rejected Soviet charges against activities in West Berlin.

The Soviet press on Jan. 12 published the exchange of greetings between Khrushchev and Chancellor Adenauer on the occasion of Adenauer's birthday.

To date the Soviet press has not picked up the Chancellor's New Year's press interview which included several statements of the type often seized upon by Soviet propaganda to buttress their campaign to portray West German "militarism" as the major threat to European peace.

8. Belgian Strike. From the beginning of the Belgian strike Soviet propaganda has attempted to present it in class-struggle terms with a strong implication that the strike and resultant chaos are illustrative of the deterioration of Western capitalism. A heavy volume of material including photographs, editorials, reports by various bloc journalists and others drawn from the Western press has appeared in the Soviet information media on a daily basis. In addition to the over-all impression of deterioration, the Soviets have tied the strike to "Belgian colonialism" in the Congo.

[redacted]
(Classification)
CONFIDENTIAL

INTERNAL

9. Party Congress Scheduled for October 17: (OFFICIAL USE ONLY) Soviet press of January 11 reported previous day's action by Central Committee Plenum in scheduling regular 22nd CPSU Congress for October 17 and approving Congress agenda of which single most significant item would seem to be adoption new basic party program -- 42 years after last revision in 1919 of program adopted 1903. Khrushchev is to speak on program topic as well as to deliver main report of Central Committee to congress. From content of subsequent editorial commentary, it is evident that period of review of progress and achievements in party and other aspects Soviet life will extend back to 20th Congress in February 1956, thus permitting recollection of Khrushchev's attack on personality cult, stress on greater party democracy and machinations of anti-party group and other topics suitable as background for electing a new central committee and other party organs purged of elements considered unreliable or undesirable from Khrushchev leadership's point of view. Fresh reminders of liquidation of Stalin cult of personality and Khrushchev's defeat of anti-party group opposition began appearing in press January 12 (see Pravda editorial on Congress).

The draft party program is to be published in advance of the congress, presumably to enable nation-wide discussion. Although no date of publication was given, the draft seems certain to be released at least some weeks prior to September local and republic party conferences and congresses which will choose delegates to Congress. The complexities involved in drawing up what presumably will be the blue-print for the transition to Communism probably was an important factor in late scheduling Congress which, according to some indications, had apparently been originally planned for earlier in the year. In addition, the Soviet leadership at the present time faces such uncertainties as new American administration, difficulties with Chinese Communists, continued troubles in agriculture at home. On basis 2000/1 ratio for electing delegates, total number of voting and non-voting delegates will be approximately 4,400, triple the average participation of the last three congresses.

10. Central Committee Plenum. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY) From accounts published thus far, the CPSU CC Plenum which began January 10 and is still in session has been of political interest in the scheduling of the 22nd Congress (above), the active role being played by Khrushchev, and the recurrent theme that setbacks and deficiencies in agricultural performance are frequently the result of deliberate and criminal deceptions of the state by a variety of means rather than of simple mismanagement. It seems curious that there has not been any listing of Party Presidium members and candidate members present and that the only indications that Khrushchev has addressed or will address the plenum on agricultural themes are the various references by speakers to helpful criticisms and suggestions contained in the "theses" of a speech (vystupleniye) by him "at the present plenum." It seems likely that these "theses" have been circulated in written form prior to his speech and that the latter may be combined with an address on the results of the November Communist and Workers' Parties Conference

which is the last item on the published outline of the agenda (speaker not identified. In an unpublished speech on this same topic, Khrushchev addressed a joint meeting of the party organizations of the Central Committee's Higher Party School, Academy of Social Sciences and Institute of Marxism-Leninism at the Kremlin January 6.)

The only Presidium figures whose presence at the plenum has been recorded in press accounts of the plenum are Khrushchev, D.S.POLYANSKIY, N.V.PODGORNYY, K.T.MAZUROV and V.P.MZHAVANADZE. Of these, only Mzhavanadze seems to have been able to deliver his speech without interjections, often "biting" and almost always illustrating detailed and specific knowledge of the area or problem in question, by Khrushchev. In a now familiar pattern, they and all other speakers whose speeches have been reported in the press have gone out of their way to pay homage to Khrushchev by frequent citations, credits, and laudatory references. Of the leadership, only Khrushchev and A.I.MIKOYAN have been noticeably active at non-plenum functions this week and they appear together (without other leaders) in the only photographs relating to the plenum which have been published thus far.

11. Christmas Eve in Moscow. (UNCLASSIFIED) January 6, 1961 was Christmas Eve for the Orthodox Church. The holiday was celebrated quietly and without the disturbances that marred Easter observances, 1960. Publicist activities of the anti-religious and atheist movement indicate no change in the official position that would account for such "tolerance." More likely it probably was felt that rowdyism by party activists would be counter-productive or perhaps the late hours of services on a snowy night was dissuasion enough for anyone without strong motivation. Embassy officers observed services at four large churches over a period of five hours and noted no harassment of any kind.

Attendance was heavy, but the churches were not over-filled. Late-comers could easily find room, but it was impossible for them to get near the best vantage points. Some of the faithful came four hours early. As usual elderly women predominated but surprisingly enough, at early services (11:00 pm) men comprised nearly one-third of some congregations and among these were many under 40.

12. Vigilance-Espionage. (OFFICIAL USE ONLY) On January 6 Soviet Russia began what appeared to be a series of articles directed against US Embassy officials based on the book Caught in the Act released last week by the Soviet Information Service (the agency that produces "Translations of the Soviet Press"). The book is a nearly exhaustive collation of scores of all kinds of espionage allegations made against the US since the end of the war. Diplomatic notes, Soviet press, photos of "spy" equipment and US personnel and US "sources" such as Newsweek magazine are all exploited to lend credibility to the charges. Although it is not yet possible to buy the book in book stores, unsolicited complimentary copies in English have been distributed to some Embassies in Moscow.

Soviet Russia's excerpts from the book have concentrated on "diplomat-spies"; Izvestia, on the other hand, started the same day to serialize material alleging capture of US parachute agents. Special cooperation of the KGB supposedly made possible an expansion of the material found in Caught in the Act. Using this title, both Trud (January 8) and Evening Moscow (January 9) had individual articles, the latter emphasizing US penetration and defector inducement efforts against Soviet citizens and facilities abroad. More recently, coverage of the CC Plenum (which started on January 10) seems to have crowded these stories out of the papers for the time being.

MILITARY

Negative

For the Ambassador:

Boris H. Klosson

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Counselor for Political Affairs

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